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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003377

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SUBJECT: CODEL BOYD'S OCT 7 MEETING WITH PM MALIKI

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In an Oct. 7 meeting with Codel Boyd, Prime Minister (PM) Maliki said that while the picture in Iraq was "not entirely rosey," discernible political and security progress has nevertheless been made. He credited his government with having pulled the country back from the edge of the abyss of civil war. Rep. Wicker told the PM that there was still an urgent need for further progress, and asked whether -- in the absence of a legislative solution on hydrocarbons -- PM Maliki could use his executive authority to achieve a temporary fix. Maliki claimed that the GOI was prepared to accept foreign investment into the oil sector even without legislative progress. In response to a question from Rep. Cohen, Maliki called for more rapid progress on training and equipping Iraqi security forces, and rejected the notion that Iranian forces might someday supplant MNF-I in Iraq. End summary.

¶2. (C) Codel Boyd (Rep. Allen Boyd, D-FL; Rep. Roger Wicker, R-MS; Rep. Wayne Gilchrest, R-MD; Rep. Betty Sutton, D-OH; and Rep. Stephen Cohen, D-TN) met Oct. 7 with PM Maliki at his residence. Maliki asked the members of the Codel about their visit to Doura earlier in the day, noting that the on-going security challenges in Doura and Saydiyah. The picture was "not entirely rosey," Maliki conceded. Nevertheless, the PM said that there was "definitely" security progress in Baghdad as a result of operation Fardh al-Qanoon. Maliki credited his government with having pulled the country back from the brink of civil war, recalling that last year more than 100 bodies a day were being recovered from Baghdad's streets. Non-combatants from all camps -- men, women and children -- were being killed simply on the basis of their ethno-sectarian identity. Maliki stressed that the situation today is far different: the number of ethno-sectarian murders committed in Baghdad each day can be counted on one hand. The key now is for the GOI to sustain the progress that has been made, and to enact legislation that will help solidify the foundations of Iraq's fledgling democracy. "We're now in a situation that allows us to think strategically," said Maliki.

Questions on the Oil Law  
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¶3. (C) Rep. Wicker reminded Maliki that there was still an urgent need for additional progress, underscoring that Congress expects to see concrete legislation emanating from the GOI and the Council of Representatives. "We need you to do everything you can, so we can make the case to the American people that progress is being made," said Rep. Wicker. He then asked Maliki whether, in the absence of a hydrocarbons law, the PM could modify the existing system through executive decree, even if the resultant solution were only temporary. Maliki said that he had already issued instructions to accomplish much of what the draft legislation on oil revenues was intended to accomplish (i.e., an equitable division of the nation's oil wealth on the basis of

each province's percentage of the overall population). In that regard, he noted that the Kurds are already receiving 17 percent of oil revenues based on an internal agreement that he described as "an old issue." Maliki pointed out that, consequently, passage of the oil revenues law will have relatively little practical effect on revenue distribution. Maliki also claimed that the GOI was fully prepared to begin receiving foreign investment in the petroleum sector, even prior to the adoption of new legislation creating the framework for such investment. He noted that one obstacle to passage of the hydrocarbons law was that certain parties (i.e., the Kurds) were linking that law to constitutional amendments.

#### Future of Coalition Forces/Origins of AQI

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14. (C) Rep. Cohen asked Maliki about comments attributed to him to the effect that, if Coalition Forces were to suddenly depart Iraq, that Iraq could fend for itself and would, if necessary, turn to "other friends" such as Iran. Maliki, feigning shock, asked Rep. Cohen where he had read such things. "The New York Times," responded Rep. Cohen. "Then I should sue the New York Times," declared Maliki, who urged the Congressman to turn to the Wall Street Journal or the Washington Post for coverage of Iraq in the future. Turning serious, Maliki stressed that "no one will replace MNF-I except for Iraqi forces" and added that he would not even let a UN-force, much less the Iranians, into Iraq.

15. (C) Turning (in response to another question from Rep. Cohen) to the origins of AQI, Maliki observed that Al-Qaeda's presence in Iraq pre-dated Operation Iraqi Freedom and the collapse of the former regime. "By the time that the (new) Iraqi state began to emerge and stabilize itself, AQI was

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already well-established here," Maliki lamented. The good news, in his opinion, was that AQI had lost considerable ground over the past year due to the Anbar awakening and improvements in the ISF. As a result, AQI's dreams of establishing an Islamic state were no longer realistic. "Al-Qaeda is on the run, and they have no fixed headquarters," said Maliki, who added that public opinion had turned not only against AQI but against militias as well.

#### T&E/Iran/Message to Congress

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16. (C) The Iraqi leader said that it was imperative to quicken the pace of training and equipping the Iraqi security forces. In one area, he said, the government had 15,000 policemen on the payroll but only 3,000 rifles with which to arm them. "The training and equipping provided thus far (by the Coalition) has been good, but we need more," said Maliki, who noted that the GOI had recently purchased some weapons from China and the Ukraine to speed deliveries. Getting the right equipment into the hands of the ISF would allow the Iraqis to maintain recent security gains once the "surge" forces have been redeployed.

17. (C) Asked by Rep. Gilchrest for thoughts about how to pursue U.S.-Iranian dialogue, Maliki expressed strong support for the two rounds of talks earlier this year between the Ambassador and his Iranian counterpart. "War with Iran would be catastrophic," Maliki cautioned. Asked by Rep. Sutton what message Maliki would like to send to Congress, the Iraqi PM said he would remind the Congress that the U.S. has accomplished a lot in Iraq. "You've toppled an evil dictatorship and established a democracy. We hope that you'll protect democracy in Iraq. If the Iraqi model succeeds, the whole region will move towards democracy. Please express my thanks and appreciation to Congress," Maliki said.

18. (U) Codel Boyd did not have an opportunity to clear this

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